

A Hand Up – A Charitable Fund Outcome Questionnaire

Literacy Action, Inc. is pleased to have partnered with A Hand Up this year, serving nearly 800 students during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This Charitable Fund Outcome Questionnaire provides an update on the partnership. It is Literacy Action's goal that the two organizations continue to work with one another to fulfill the missions of both and to provide state-of-the-art services to our clients and achieve positive and lasting community impact.

Literacy Action is especially grateful to have received \$9,153 from A Hand Up to provide a Reading 4 class during the time period of May 9, 2011 to August 20, 2011. This was a self-contained project which is not self-renewing. 100% of the funds were used and all for the purpose of providing the class.

HISTORY

Literacy Action, Inc. (LAI) was founded in 1968 by a group of dedicated volunteers working out of the basement of Central Presbyterian Church in downtown Atlanta. The agency was committed to ensuring that those adults who had been denied an adequate education would have a place to go to learn what they had missed and that low-literate residents of the city would be taught to read.

LAI was the first local adult literacy agency in Atlanta to move from one-on-one tutoring to a classroom model for delivering basic academic skills as well as GED preparation. This cost-effective method of teaching benefited Literacy Action and its students, whose progress could be measured and tracked as in a traditional school. By 2000, LAI had developed into a leader in the literacy field, with programs designed to meet the needs of individual adult learners, families, community organizations, and corporations, and it is the oldest and largest community-based adult literacy program in Georgia.

MISSION AND VALUES

Literacy Action's mission is to build better futures for our students by teaching undereducated adults literacy, life, and work skills that empower them to reach their potential as self-sufficient individuals, parents, employees and citizens.

Our organizational values include the following and are incorporated across the curriculum:

- **Best Practices** in the field of adult education and in the not-for-profit sector
- **Learner-Centric** instruction where clients are active partners in classroom content and in ownership of their success
- **Maximum Impact** for clients and the greater Metro Atlanta community
- **Self Sufficiency** for clients and their families
- **Collaboration and Maximized Partnerships** to achieve community change and lasting impact
- **Family Outcomes** through improved literacy rates and education of the adults who are raising children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren
- **Job/Economic Outcomes** through improved life and work skills for all clients.

A Hand Up – A Charitable Fund Outcome Questionnaire**PROJECT SUMMARY UPDATE**

During the summer semester of May 9, 2011 to August 20, 2011 LAI provided two Reading 4 classes of which the grant from A Hand Up Charitable Fund funded one class. The class covered vocabulary, reading comprehension, fluency building exercises, writing, work, and life skills. Students were assigned activities across the various learning styles and in different formats such as group, pair, and individual work, to address the aforementioned skills. Exercises included tasks such as reading selections, choosing vocabulary, comparing/contrasting, reading for context, etc. in an effort to help students move to the next level of instruction, which is Pre-GED.

From July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, Literacy Action, Inc. provided services to students that included the full continuum of education classes that adult learners need to accomplish their educational and career goals. This includes providing services to learners at the very lowest levels – sometimes entering the program at a zero reading level – to those who need only slight remediation to take the GED exam and be ready for post-secondary education. All LAI classes are taught by trained adult education teachers. All registrants attend a two-day testing/registration process that includes a thorough screening of educational levels using the newly implemented GAIN (General Assessment of Individual Needs) test. All students then attend a two-day Orientation where they discuss the value of education, the challenges of returning to the classroom, and the expectations of LAI students. On the last day of Orientation, students are provided with a schedule of classes. The classes are based on students' pre-test scores and are matched to their entry levels and the remediation they need to achieve personal goals. Class offerings include:

- 6 levels of reading instruction
- 4 levels of math instruction
- Computer classes
- And other elective classes such as Career Skills, Health and Financial Literacy.

All classes are held twice weekly and are two hours long. The majority of all LAI students take two or more classes each academic semester. Lower level reading and math classes are offered on Mondays and Wednesdays; higher level classes (including GED classes) are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Classes are held from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We also offer additional instruction on Saturday mornings.

The majority of students pre-test at or below a 5th grade reading level and attend lower level literacy and math classes. The smallest percentage of students attends upper level classes, and only a small number are ready to enter the GED program (entry level requirement is a 9th grade reading level or higher).

PROJECT IMPACT

Literacy Action, Inc., has a 43-year history of working to end this intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and improving the prospects of low-literate, low-income adults and their families. Literacy levels of adult learners are raised 1-1/2 reading levels for every 40 to 100 instructional hours. During the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year, Literacy Action **registered 786 unduplicated** students. Many of these students attended all 4 sessions of classes during the academic year, and they attended more than one class each session. In total, LAI students completed **37,443 hours of class** during the year.

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LAI retained 85% of our students from month to month. By comparison, the accepted average is a retention rate of 50%.

We believe that the greatest tool for leveraging families out of poverty is increasing their literacy levels and improving work and life skills. Literacy Action's programs are geared to providing adult learners the skills to become self sufficient individuals, employees, parents, and citizens. We know that crime-free neighborhoods start where the adults are educated, skilled, and able to provide financial stability for themselves and their families. We also know that the most efficient approach to ending the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and poverty, in which the majority of our clients and their families are trapped, is to raise the educational levels of the adults who are raising children. **More than half of our students were considered "returning"** which means they stay with us for a longer time thus able to produce greater educational gains and therefore great more impact on their family's educational attainment and improve their community.

In addition, LAI students learned **critical life skills** such as **financial literacy** (learning to open a checking account, creating a family budget, etc.). **Health literacy** was also incorporated across the courses they took at LAI, increasing their knowledge of how to access quality health care and learning the importance of preventative health care, nutrition, and exercise. All of these factors combined make a difference in our community. Thanks to A Hand Up for helping Literacy Action impact the lives of those that need it most.